CLAIMS:

1.   A method for efficiently delivering copies of a customer's electronic file across a client-server computer network, comprising:

hosting copies of the customer's file at a plurality of servers as a component of a service;

compressing the file using a compression codec as a further component of the service;

receiving, by a selected one of the servers, a network request for the file from a requesting client, the request specifying a list of recognized file encoding schemes including the compression codec; and

responding to the network request by transmitting the compressed file over the network from the selected server to the requesting client.

2.   The method of claim 1, wherein compressing the file is performed dynamically in response to the network request as a further component of the service.

3.   The method of claim 1, wherein compressing the file is performed in advance of the network request as a further component of the service.

4.   The method of claim 1, wherein compressing the file is performed by compressing one or more copies of the file at one or more of the servers as a further component of the service.

5.   The method of claim 1, wherein compressing the file is performed by first compressing the file, and subsequently distributing copies of the compressed file to the plurality of servers as a further component of the service.

6.   The method of claim 1, wherein compressing the file is performed at least partly depending upon the file type of the file as a further component of the service.

7.   The method of claim 1, wherein the compression codec is substantially lossless.

8.   The method of claim 7, wherein compressing further includes removing file data that does not substantively affect display of the compressed file by a standard browser of the client as a further component of the service.

9.   The business method of claim 8, wherein removing file data includes removing data selected from the group comprising source code comments and extra blank characters.

10.   The method of claim 7, wherein the compression codec is embodied in the GZIP compression utility.

11.   The method of claim 1, further comprising selecting the selected one of the servers to handle the request at least partly based upon one or more criteria indicating a relative quality of connectivity between the selected server and the requesting client, as a further component of the service.

12.   The method of claim 11, wherein the connectivity criteria are selected from the group comprising geographical distance, topological distance, bandwidth, latency, jitter, financial cost, and political boundaries.

13.   The method of claim 1, wherein the network is the Internet and the network request is an HTTP protocol request.

14.   A method for transmitting compressed data from a hosting server to a requesting client across a computer network, comprising:

      receiving a network request from the client for a file, the request specifying a list of acceptable encoding schemes;

      dynamically compressing the file using a substantially lossless compression codec, in response to the network request, the compression codec being one of the acceptable encoding schemes; and

      transmitting the compressed file from the hosting server to the client via the network in fulfillment of the request.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising dynamically generating the requested file in response to the network request.

16. The method of claim 14 wherein dynamically compressing is performed at least partly depending upon a file type of the requested file.

17. The method of claim 14 wherein receiving the network request is performed by the hosting server.

18. The method of claim 14 wherein the hosting server is one of a plurality of content delivery servers, each of the servers hosting a copy of the file.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the hosting server is a selected to receive the network request at least partly based upon one or more criteria of connectivity between the hosting server and the requesting client.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the connectivity criteria are selected from a group comprising geographical distance, topological distance, bandwidth, latency, jitter, financial cost, and political boundaries.

21. The method of claim 14, wherein dynamically compressing further includes removing file data that does not substantively affect display of the compressed file by a standard browser of the client.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein removing file data includes removing data selected from the group comprising source code comments and extra blank characters.

23. The method of claim 14, wherein the substantially lossless compression codec is embodied in the GZIP compression utility.

24. The method of claim 14, wherein the network is the Internet and the network request is an HTTP protocol request.

25.   The method of claim 14, wherein the requesting client includes a light wireless client.

26.   A system for transmitting compressed data to a requesting client across a computer network, in response to a network request from the client for a file, the request specifying a list of acceptable encoding schemes, the system comprising:

a proxy server, operable to receive the network request from the client and, in response to said request, to generate a modified request for a version of the file that is compressed in accordance with a substantially lossless compression codec, the compression codec being one of the acceptable encoding schemes;

a hosting server, being configured to transmit, in response to the modified request, the compressed version of the file to the client via the network in fulfillment of the request.

27.   The system of claim 26 wherein the modified request specifies a modified file name with an extension that identifies the compression codec.

28.   The system of claim 26 wherein the proxy server is further operable to generate one or more additional modified requests, each of said requests corresponding to a different one of the acceptable encoding schemes for the file.

29.   The system of claim 26 wherein the proxy server is operable to forward the modified request to the hosting server.

30.   The system of claim 26 wherein the compressed version of the file is created dynamically in response to the network request.

31.   The system of claim 26 wherein the compressed version of the file is created in advance of the network request.

32.   The system of claim 26 wherein the hosting server is one of a plurality of content delivery servers, each of the servers hosting a copy of the file.

33.   The system of claim 32, wherein the hosting server is selected to transmit the compressed file at least partly based upon one or more criteria of connectivity between the hosting server and the requesting client.

34.   The system of claim 33, wherein the connectivity criteria are selected from a group comprising geographical distance, topological distance, bandwidth, latency, jitter, financial cost, and political boundaries.

35.   The system of claim 26 wherein the compression codec is embodied in the GZIP compression utility.

36.   The system of claim 26, wherein the network is the Internet and the network request is an HTTP protocol request.